



**TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
CENTRAL OFFICE  
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**April 22, 2005 Board Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioner's Present:**

Commissioner Hakeem  
Commissioner Loveday-Rogers  
Chairman Wiggins  
Commissioner Rodriguez  
Commissioner Todd (via Phone)  
Commissioner Walker (Via Phone)  
Commissioner Hodge (via Phone)  
Commissioner Pierce

**Commissioner's Absent:**

Commissioner Garrett  
Commissioner Pride  
Commissioner Kyles  
Commissioner Hammonds  
Commissioner Lewis  
Commissioner Smith  
Commissioner Jones

**Staff Present:**

Amber D. Gooding, Executive Director  
Antonio Adams, Deputy Director  
Scott Mayer, General Counsel  
Shay Rose, Assistant Counsel  
Cynthia Howard, Communications Officer  
Lisa Lancaster, Director's Assistant

**Guests:**

Roy Rogers

**Call to Order**

Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Commissioner Rogers offered the invocation. Roll call was taken.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the January 28, 2005 were reviewed and Commissioner Rogers made a motion to accept, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierce. A vote was taken and passed.

**Announcements**

Director Gooding introduced the new Commissioner, Patricia Pierce. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and Commissioner Pierce gave a brief overview of her activities and associations. The board welcomed her.

**New Business**

Communications Officer, Cynthia Howard, gave an overview of the radio and TV commercials that will be airing soon and played the TV spots for the commission. She

thanked each of the Commissioner's involved in the taping and noted that airing schedules were emailed to each Commissioner. Several noted that they had seen them on TV.

Commissioner Rodriguez suggested partnering with Department of Safety, who has received a grant to air PSA's in State office waiting rooms. Ms. Howard will research options and report back to the board. She also gave an update on the tracking information that has been added to the Complaint form.

An update was also given on the joint THRC/MDHA Housing conference on April 15<sup>th</sup> and thanked Commissioner Kyles for being the Keynote speaker. Thanks were also given to Chairman Wiggins for attending the Tennessee Press Association meeting with Assistant Counsel, Shay Rose.

### **Employment Case Report**

Deputy Director Antonio Adams reported on Employment case information and noted that the number of complaints received had doubled and was very proud of the staff working hard and reducing the average case closure to 126 days. He reported that the mediation staff has resolved cases resulting in \$4,702 being awarded to claimants.

It was noted that Employment Investigators would receive training on witness preparation in the upcoming training session. Deputy Adams announced that he would be meeting with the EEOC staff at the Indianapolis, IN Regional office on Monday, April 25, 2005 for a planning meeting.

Commissioner Hakeem made a motion to accept the report and Commissioner Rodriguez seconded it.

At this time, Cynthia Howard, Communications Officer, introduced her new assistant, Dyonne Williams to the Board she gave a brief history of education and employment. The Board welcomed her.

### **Housing Case Report**

Director Amber Gooding reported that April is Fair Housing Month and outlined the activities THRC has hosted. In the absence of Robert Bright, Housing Director, Director Gooding reported cases closed and updated the Board on the HUD contract changes that are being put into effect such as payment increase from \$1,800 to \$2,400 per case closed, very stringent timelines for closing cases and the possibility that THRC will be authorized to process Housing Authority cases.

Director Gooding pointed out the map of Tennessee, which indicates the number of housing and employment complaints received statewide for commissioner's to review.

Chairman Wiggins stressed the importance of communication with the public to inform them of the agency's mission and the task at hand for community leaders and especially the Board of Commissioner's to get the word out.

Commissioner Pierce noted that employment matters needed to focus on the education of employers, to act as preventative measures, which would reduce the number of EEOC complaints filed.

Commissioner Rodriquez made a motion to accept the report, which was seconded by Commissioner Hakeem.

### **Legal Counsel Report**

#### **Legislation**

General Counsel, Scott Mayer, updated the Board on the progress of the two bills that THRC filed. The “Davidson County venue” bill passed both the House and the Senate and is awaiting the Governor’s signature. Also, the “Attendance” bill is up for discussion in the Senate.

He gave an overview of the other bills pending that may impact THRC.

Commissioner Pierce made a motion to accept the report; Commissioner Rodriquez seconded it.

#### **Cause Cases**

Assistant Counsel, Shay Rose reported on the status of nine current cause cases in THRC inventory. Commissioner Rodriquez made a motion to accept the report; Commissioner Rogers seconded it.

The announcement was made that the May Board meeting would be a telephone conference meeting on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

With no further business to attend to, Chairman Wiggins called for the board meeting to be adjourned. The meeting was closed at 11:12 am.